

tween men, unless they are first born of God. It is upon this hypothesis that John urges the fulfilling of this commandment of love toward each other. "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God." It is just in proportion as our communion with God is real and close that our love will be deep and abiding. Not, however, as the result of effort, or in obedience to command, but as an answering result of God's love to us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. . . . And we have known and believed the love that God hath for us. God is love, and that he dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (I John 3: 10, 16.) Thruout the New Testament our attention is always called to the fact of *God's love to us*, as manifested in Christ Jesus; and our love is but the answer back to him of that love which has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as we have come and stood under the flow of it.

I can think of no better illustration of the relation of the Christian's love to the love of God than that which is afforded by the contemplation of the rising spray from the Falls of Niagara. Who that has stood beside that mighty cataract, and looked upon the boundless waters pouring, in a thundering torrent, over that stupendous precipice to the depths below, and watched the mist as it rises and floats upward and backward over the Falls, and outward over the waters and land, has not been charmed and filled with holy admiration as he has contemplated this parable in Nature? That mighty torrent of waters, pouring itself, with ceaseless and exhaustless energy, day and night into the river below, is what the love of God is to sinners. Who can measure it? Who can estimate it? The thin, and yet beautiful spray, arising from the foot of the Falls, is just a little of these same waters going back in grateful acknowledgement to the source whence it came. So is the believer's love to God. It is the rebound of his own love. Only a little, yea, only an infinitesimal portion given back to him who so loved us. As the spray does not rise by any forced effort of its own, so neither does the love of the believer go out to God by reason of any effort on his part. It ascends by a law of its own that overcomes the downward law of gravity. The believer who stands under the Niagara of God's love poured out thru Christ will not have to make an effort to love God; his love will ascend without effort. This is to "keep yourself in the love of God." If we draw near to the place of God's manifested love, our hearts will be filled, and we cannot help, as we will not want to help, loving God. If we are far off from him, and do not draw to him, our hearts will be as the waters far below the falls; there will be no ascending spray, no answering love from the wealth of his love which still flows thru us. The whirlpool, below the Falls, affords another parable; namely, of the violent effort which some believers make to love God. Look at the commotion there. See how the waters boil and roar, making

mighty din of effort; but there is no wreath of spray on whose bright particles the sun paints a rainbow.

Love to God is like the color and perfume of the flower that blooms in the sunshine. It is the answer to the source of all light and life. Put the flower away in the cellar, out of the light of the sun away from his warm rays, and bid it to bloom and exhale its perfume, and its answer to that command will be paleness, colorlessness, odorlessness, death. If you would have it bloom again, take it back and "keep it in the sunshine," and it will recover its beauty and fill the house once more with its fragrance. Let the believer get away from God and his love, lose communion with him, or even turn his eyes inward upon himself and set himself to the task of loving God as a duty, and he will die. Let him return and "keep himself in the love of God," and his love to God will revive again and fill all his life with gladness.

Because this is so important a matter to many souls, suffer me to offer another illustration of this truth. Let us fancy a beautiful lake, such as we all know of, locked in the cold embrace of frost and snow. Realizing its frozen state, it says to itself: "It is my duty to contribute to the store of moisture in the clouds; should be sending up from my fulness, that there may be rain upon the earth; but I am so cold, and so locked in the embrace of ice and snow that I can do nothing. Nevertheless, I must make an effort." Now if we may fancy that lake able to get up a commotion within its waters, and lashing itself into a fury until it had broken its icy fetters, would it have accomplished anything? Nothing at all. But we can fancy the sun speaking down from his place, high in the heavens above, and saying: "It is vain for you to make any such efforts yourself. Do you not know that it is only as I shine upon you that you can yield your moisture to the clouds? Abide awhile until I shall come nearer, and I will send down the slant javelins of my heat, and they will melt the ice off your heart, and then I will draw a portion of your waters up into the clouds, and you may thus contribute to the rain supply for the thirsty earth." After awhile we visit the lake in Summer time, and some evening, as the sun is declining, we can see the thin lines of moisture being literally drawn up into the clouds by the rays of the sun. The cold and loveless believer has this advantage over the lake of frozen waters. He can go to the place where the Son of Righteousness is near. He can put himself "in the love of God," and so have his icy fetters thawed off his heart, and his love drawn out and upward to God. His joy will not be from the consciousness of the love that is going out of his heart upward to God, but in the consciousness of the warm divine *love of God* pouring itself out into his heart by the Holy Ghost. The believer never rejoices in himself, not even in the divinely awakened emotions in his own heart, but always in God. I never heard a believer say that he was happy be-

cause he loved God, but always because he had an assured sense of God's love to him.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God." But what is meant by keeping yourself in the love of God? How am I to do that? I think I can show you in a few words what that means and how you can do it. Let us suppose that you have been ill for a long while and you are now convalescing. One day the physician comes in to see you, and speaks encouraging words concerning your recovery. It is a bright, warm day in the early Spring. The birds are back; the world is once more arising out of the long Winter, and you long to be out and breathe the fresh, pure, sweet air again. You say to your doctor: "Can I not take a little walk out of doors to-day?" He looks abroad and says to you: "Yes, upon one condition." "What is that?" you eagerly ask. "Why, that you will keep yourself in the sunshine." You gladly assent. You have no difficulty in understanding what he means by that. You know that you are to avoid the shady side of the street, where the dampness and chill of Winter still linger, and keep always where the warm rays of the sun are shining down upon the earth. Now, supposing that you have gone out, you come at once into the shadow of your own house, and the chill and dampness strike you before you can pass over to the sunny side of the street; but, instead of walking quickly out of the shade, you begin to rub your hands and think of how cold you are. And, looking across the way where the sun is shining, you should be overheard by some friends to say, "Oh! it is so cold, and I am so chilly. I wish I could get a little of the warmth of the sun about me. I suppose I must walk up and down here as briskly as my strength will allow, and then I shall feel better; and by and by, when I get warmer, the sun will have gotten around so as to shine on my side of the street." Should any one hear you reasoning in this way, would he not say to you: "Why, man, do not stand shivering in the cold here. You will never generate warmth in your body in this damp, cold place. You have not life enough in your body to make you warm. Why don't you step across the way, where the sun is shining, and you will soon be filled with his blessed warmth. *Keep in the sunshine* if you want to be warm yourself." It is even so with many Christians. They are in poor spiritual health. They are wretched and miserable. They are longing for

"The love they once enjoyed,  
When first they knew the Lord."

They have aroused themselves and determined to "do better." They leave the place where they have been so long confined by spiritual ill-health, and have started out in pursuit of the "joy of salvation." They repair to the dark, cold and gloomy shades of Sinai, drawn thither by the voice of God who says from the blackness and darkness of that dreadful mount: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy